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AMERICAN LECTURES ON THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS. Second Series, 1896-1897. RELIGIONS OF PRIMITIVE PEOPLES, by Daniel G. Brinton, A.M., M.D., LL.D., Sc.D. New York, 1897. Pp. xvi., 264.

"It is safe to say that there is no other subject of modern research which concerns all classes as nearly as the study of religion" (p. x). Whether or not the reader accept this broad statement of the American Committee for Lectures on the History of Religions, he cannot fail to be grateful to them for the lectures which they are providing for the American public. Dr. Brinton was listened to with great interest, and the volume containing his lectures in printed form deserves a wide reading. Specialists have long been familiar with Dr. Brinton's investigations, and at least one of his books, "The Myths of the New World," has been repeatedly printed to meet popular demand. Those who become acquainted with the author for the first time through the present volume will be impressed with the breadth and accuracy of his information and with the clear, vigorous style which he uses.

The first two lectures perform a very necessary task in clearing the ground for the discussion of the subject. What is religion? and what is primitive religion? and how can we learn about it? Such are the questions rapidly passed in review. Religion is taken to be a development of an effort for the ideal on the part of the human soul, a process which is realized but slowly and with the evolution of society. This universal function of social life is to be studied among primitive races,—*i.e.*, races who are on the lower and therefore earlier stages of civilization. In this way we learn not the beginning of religion, but some of the stages out of which our higher religions have developed.

In the following three chapters the author discusses primitive religious expression in the *word*, the *object*, and the *rite*; and he appears at his best in the great mass of material here forcefully presented in orderly form. The convenient arrangement involves some difficulties, especially in Chapter III. The word to the god and the word from the god are not very closely allied; and the institution of the tabu is thrown somewhat out of its proper setting. So in Chapter IV. sacred places are brought under the category of sacred objects, though the places are not themselves worshipped; and while "genesiac" cults are treated under the same heading, the author rightly dwells not on the objects, but on the character

and meaning of the cults. These disadvantages are compensated by the usefulness of such general headings in grouping material for a lecture. The sixth lecture has a somewhat misleading title ("Lines of Development in Primitive Religion"). In reality it discusses savage religion as a power for good in the development of savage society, and only the last four or five pages treat the stadia in the development of religion. The main theme of the chapter is, however, a very fitting conclusion to a study of primitive religion.

It is not to be expected that when so large a theme is treated in a few lectures, all the positions will win acceptance by any other one student who is working in the same lines. The discussion of sacred stones, p. 147, of trees as sacred, p. 150, of savage "baptism," p. 195, the explanation of burial rites by belief in resurrection, p. 211, are a few of the topics on which views different from those of the author might be maintained. Dr. Brinton is especially severe on W. Robertson Smith for his statement that myth is derived from ritual (pp. 113, 117, 173). But on p. 173 he admits that later myths are coined to explain rite, and at least in the study of Semitic and Indo-European religions it is difficult to find any definite myth which can be confidently regarded as older than ritual. Moreover the comparative persistence of rite as compared with myth does not seem to be duly emphasized by Dr. Brinton.

It is hardly worth while to note unimportant statements which might be questioned,—as *e.g.*, the statement as to Greek religion, p. 165, or the interpretation of the fish in old Chaldean and in Christian symbolism as the emblem of life, p. 161. On p. 162 I suppose a slip of the pen is responsible for *deus* where *homo* should be read.

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THE RATIONAL OR SCIENTIFIC IDEAL OF MORALITY, containing a Theory of Cognition, a Metaphysic of Religion, and an "Apo-logia pro amore." By P. T. Fitzgerald, author of "The Philosophy of Self-Consciousness;" "The Principle of Sufficient Reason;" "A Protest against Agnosticism," etc. Pp. xvi., 357.

Mrs. Fitzgerald appears to have been writing a series of philosophical treatises, and is anxious to secure the publication of the ethical epilogue without waiting for some intermediate publications; and this book, in fact, includes a summary of projected books on Truth and Harmony or Loveliness which are intermediate.